1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

PLATE I.

133
501

The beach Kowu, early in the morning before the departure of the canoes to the gardens on the mainland of Malekula, seen in the distance across the dividing sea. One native has already hoisted a European sail

[facing p. 25]

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

133
501

FIG. 3

View of Vao from a landing-place on the mainland of Malekula. The broad beach on Vao is Kowu, belonging to the Superior Side of Vao and used by the double-village of Pete-hul-Togh-'anu. In the foreground are the sterns of two small coastal canoes waiting for owners who are tilling their mainland gardens.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

Even when this is agreed, the debtor may not possess a pig of the exact required grade. This leads to fresh transactions with yet other relatives, in which the debtor seeks to exchange such smaller pigs as he possesses against the single larger one demanded of him. In this way the ball rolls on. One transaction leads to another. Every pig-owner, that is to say every male adult, has pigs out on loan and is himself also a debtor to others. No man ever sees all his own pigs around him till the day of his death, when the final effort is made to regulate his affairs. Then, debtors and creditors assemble at his house and, if the latter are lucky and the dying man solvent, a just settlement takes place. If not, the debts are handed on to his successors. No loan is ever forgotten, and, with the additional factor of the uncertain prospect of life of any given pig, the complications never end. Every native complains that he has been cheated of value by others, and disputes leading to the forcible detention, or even the theft, of pigs are not infrequent. Given such a system, and the retentive memories of the natives, it is a tribute to the general common sense of the community and to the solidarity of kinsfolk—for it is only among close kinsfolk that extensive borrowing takes place—that such scenes are not more common than they are.

Sea-voyages for trade in pigs.

This short review of the commercial value of pigs has so far been confined within the precincts of Vao and of the neighbouring Small Islands and villages of the adjacent Malekulan mainland, where, owing to intermarriage, a Vao man's maternal kinsfolk often dwell. Perhaps the most striking evidence of the great value attached to them, of the great labour willingly undertaken to preserve and increase the stock, and of the risks endured to prosecute this end, is that of the sea-voyages organised almost exclusively for the sake of obtaining fresh supplies, to make up for the loss caused by the sacrifice of immense numbers of tusked pigs during the course of innumerable rites. The construction and consecration of these sea-going canoes, by means of yet further sacrifice, will be described in a separate chapter.[1] Apart from the trade in turmeric leaves, obtained from the islands of Malo and Santo in return for pigs, and in a few other objects, such as special kinds of bark brought home from Ambrim for the construction of high-grade bark-board belts, also paid for with pigs, and in fine dancing-aprons used in a special kind of dance which are obtained from Oba, the sole commercial object of these voyages is the purchase of fresh stocks of pigs. Whatever the original use of these great canoes—and it is certain that they were, among other things, the vessels by means of which some portion at least of the ancestors of the existing population arrived on Vao—it is the trade in pigs that is now the prime object of their manufacture. For this purpose the immense labour of building them is

[1] Chapter XVII.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

439 undertaken, large numbers of tusked pigs are sacrificed in order to con-
484 secrate them, and the effect of this consecration is to make them taboo to
[501] women. In them the natives sail to all the large islands of the Northern New Hebrides, to Ambrim, Raga, Oba, Maewo, Malo and Santo. The chief sources of pigs are Ambrim and South Raga. Oba is chiefly visited on account of its reputation as the Land of Ta-ghar and for the special initiation rite performed there, but the trade in pigs with this island is now slight owing to its recent depopulation. Maewo, also known as the home of Ta-ghar, is now rarely visited. The trade with Malo and Santo is with pigs and turmeric leaves.

Voyages to the southern and eastern islands are usually made by night, the canoes leaving Vao in the late afternoon, and arriving at their destination some time during the following morning. Here they may stay anything up to five days, and then wait for a fair wind to take them home. The days are spent in bargaining. Emotion runs high, and there are many records of fights arising out of disputes, in some of which the visitors manage to save themselves, but in others they are slain and in most cases eaten. Individual accounts of such voyages as undertaken from Atchin will be given in a later volume.

To such lengths will the natives go to keep up their supply of pigs.

Value of tusked boars in terms of English money.

435 Before seeking the underlying reason for this passionate search, one
436 more fact may be mentioned to show the immense value attached to these
434 animals. During the time of my visit there was but little European money in the Small Islands, acquired chiefly by means of the very low wages earned by the indentured labour undertaken by some of the younger men on white men's plantations, supplemented by the selling of a little copra to passing white men's trading-vessels. The amount of money thus made is not very great. What they do make is partly spent in buying white men's goods, such as an occasional singlet or piece of corrugated iron, partly saved up to buy whalers which now replace the sea-going canoes I have just mentioned, and partly used for trading among themselves, in which case it usually replaces their own money-mats. Pigs are not
435 often sold for money, but when this does happen, the prices they fetch are such as to astound the white man, who fails to understand what it is all about. Thus, when I was on Atchin, prices averaged:

For a crescent-tusker	.	about £4 [1]
„ curved-tusker	.	„ £6
„ re-entrant-tusker	.	„ £10, £12 or £15
„ circle-tusker	.	from £30 upwards.

[1] Deacon (4, p. 391), six years later, cites a crescent-tusker in Seniang, there called *mbong muvūr*, as being worth £5, with corresponding prices for pigs of lower grade.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

CHAPTER XVII

CANOES

TWO MAIN TYPES OF CANOE: (*a*) COASTAL, (*b*) SEA-GOING

THE natives of all the Small Islands formerly possessed two main types of single-outrigger canoe:

(*a*) Small coastal canoes, called in Vao *nu-wak*,[1] used daily for traffic between the Small Islands and the mainland on which the natives of each island have their gardens. These coastal canoes are used also for short voyages from one Small Island to another, within the comparatively safe waters fringing the Malekulan coast. Plate I shows a number of such canoes belonging to the Vao village of Pete-hul-Togh-vanu drawn up on the beach Kowu facing the Malekulan mainland. Apart from their small size, their distinguishing feature lies in the arrangement of outrigger booms, of which there are three, one forward and two close together aft.[2] Women and children use these canoes as well as men, and they are not consecrated. The larger ones are capable of carrying eight men.

(*b*) Large sea-going canoes called *nu-wak wala*. The word *wala* is connected with the Vao *walau*, meaning technically to "run before the wind," but more loosely used as a generic word for "to sail." It is connected with the Tanga word *walau*, meaning voyage, and with the Polynesian *folau*, meaning "to go on an ocean voyage."[3] It is of interest also to note that Wala is the name for the Small Island immediately to the south of Atchin, and is the chief navigational centre for the district. This type of canoe was formerly manufactured by all coastal peoples of North and East Malekula as far south as Port Sandwich, where it was called *nuangk wala*. There it gave place to a different type used on the south and south-west coasts, described by Deacon under its Seniang name, *nimbwembew*.[4]

The sea-going canoes made in the Small Islands, capable of holding thirty or even forty men, were used formerly for voyages across open sea to the remaining large islands of the Northern New Hebrides, namely Ambrim, Raga, Oba, Maewo, Malo and Santo. The main purpose of these voyages was the trade in pigs, and from the frequent fights attendant

[1] Spelt *nuak* in my original notes supplied to Dr. Haddon and quoted in Haddon, 3, vol. II, p. 27. The Atchin form is *na-ak*, Mota *aka*, Port Sandwich *nu-angk*.

[2] It is to this type only that the descriptions in Speiser, 3, pp. 250-1, and Haddon, 3, vol. II, pp. 26-7, apply.

[3] Information from Dr. A. Capell.

[4] See Deacon, 4, pp. 204-11 and Fig. 10.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

on these trips they have come to be known also as war canoes. One of their chief other uses was to barter for the turmeric essential as a basic dye for all coloured articles of clothing, obtained exclusively from Malo and South Santo.

These canoes had four (sometimes apparently five, but never six) booms, the distinctive arrangement of which was that they were all placed close to one another amidships. This arrangement was due to the fact that, unlike the small coastal canoes which have only one bow and are paddled always in the same direction, the sea-going canoes were constructed so as to be able to sail in both directions, having a bow at both ends, so that the booms had to be placed symmetrically to allow the vessel to be reversed at will. Owing to the sacred nature of the pig trade for which they were chiefly used,[1] the sea-going canoes were consecrated by the sacrifice of tusked boars with all its attendant dances and rites, and from the moment of consecration women might neither touch nor enter them. This consecration was similar in its main aspects to the Maki rite, and conferred upon the vessel itself the grade of the chief boar sacrificed, in just the same way as the sacrificer in the Maki rite adopts the grade of the victim he slays.[2]

Substitution of European "whalers" for sea-going canoes.

Of late years (and this was already the case at the date of my visit in 1914) the natives have preferred to save themselves the trouble of building sea-going canoes, and have taken to buying white man's "whalers" instead. The same consecration rites and the same taboos are, however, performed for the new "whalers" as for the old sea-going canoes. It was my good fortune to witness, and take photographs of, one such consecration of a "whaler" on Atchin, a detailed description of which will be reserved for a future volume. Godefroy, however, also witnessed similar scenes on Vao, which he briefly describes, and which are given below.

Two types of sea-going canoe. Probable former existence of double canoes.

It is said that there were formerly two types of sea-going canoe in use on Vao:

(1) *Nu-wak ghe-ru.* I was told of this only the last day I was on Vao, and was therefore unable to follow the statement up, as I had intended. It is interesting to note, however, that the word *ghe-ru* means "two."

[1] The cultural connexion between pigs and sea-going canoes will be discussed in a future volume on Atchin. Meanwhile, it is worth while noting Deacon's description of a rite connected with the graded society on Oba in which a canoe furnished with a mat sail is placed on a stone "tower" to commemorate the coming of the first pigs from Malo to Oba (Deacon, 3, pp. 497-8).

[2] See p. 258.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

The phrase *nu-wak ghe-ru* is thus seen to mean "two canoes," and would appear to indicate the former existence on Vao of double canoes. Though double canoes are not now found anywhere in the New Hebrides, a sand-tracing of a double canoe called *rue-rue* has been recorded by Dr. Firth from Raga. Commenting on this, Dr. Haddon writes: "There can be no doubt that the memory of double canoes persists at Raga. It is not yet possible to say whether they were used there at no very distant date or whether the drawing [sand-tracing] is a traditional one handed down from a long time back when the ancestors of the present population (or at all events one element of them) sailed in such vessels. In the not very far distant Santa Cruz group, Quiros saw double canoes in 1606, and round about 1600 A.D. there appear to have been double canoes in the southern 'Polynesian' (or more correctly, perhaps, Micronesian) Islands of the Solomons, which were used by people who were said to have usually a white skin and 'red' hair. At that time there was a great deal of voyaging by the natives." [1] As we have already seen (p. 170), it was also about this date that the existing civilisation on Vao came about through the arrival of new immigrants. It would appear, therefore, not unlikely that these people had double canoes.

(2) *Nu-wak na mangean* or *nu-wak na vel-veluan*. The word *mang* (*ne-mang* in Atchin[2]) is used for the served pieces of split bamboo which are laced over the seams between the planks of large canoes to keep them water-tight (see Fig. 54). The phrase *nu-wak na mangean* thus means "plank-built canoe." The word *veluan* means "dance," possibly referring to the dancing which occurs during the inaugural rites connected with the canoe consecration, a consecration which does not occur in the case of coastal canoes.

The double canoe, if it existed, must have disappeared some time ago. The following descriptions all refer to the single outrigger canoes of which the small coastal type is still in use, and the large sea-going type continued to be manufactured and sailed till about 1900, when it was replaced by the modern European whaler.

CONSTRUCTION (BRIEF SUMMARY)

Detailed descriptions of construction, with plans and terminology, together with accounts of sailing technique and of individual voyages, will be given in a later volume on Atchin, where they were obtained. I will here confine myself to the briefest description of canoes on Vao, in order to make the main outlines of construction clear.

[1] A. C. Haddon, in Deacon, 5, p. 145. The sand-tracing in question was recorded both by Dr. Raymond Firth and by Miss M. Hardacre. For general account of sand-tracings, see present volume, Chapter XXV.

[2] See Layard, 1, p. 38.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

501 ●

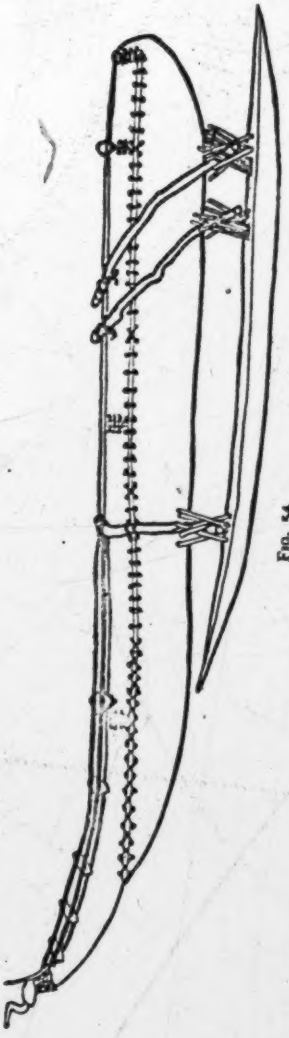

FIG. 54

Large coastal canoe composed of dug-out hull heightened by means of planks (*ne-ren*) lashed together as described on page 458, and bow-piece (*iowan*) to which the bird figure-head (*na-ka*) is attached. Note the small thwarts in the bow, though this specimen is not very large and the thwarts amidships and on the stern are lacking and the paddlers sit on the outrigger booms where these cross the hull and on the rear end of the hull which is flush with the planks. Note also the characteristic arrangement of one outrigger boom slightly forward and two close together aft.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

●501
285

501

1. Small coastal canoe with mat-sail. (*Speiser*, 3, *Plate* 62, *Fig.* 7)
2. Large coastal canoe. (*Speiser*, 3, *Plate* 31, *Fig.* 4)

[facing p. 460]

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

Proceedings begin with the dance called *Le-tean*, and when this is over, payment of pigs is made to all those living who have previously made the sail of a sea-going canoe.[1] These pigs are presented by the chief owner placing them one by one upon his shoulder and calling on the receiver to come and take it. *Tunen* is then danced till dawn, when pigs are killed and placed on heaps of yams for each village represented. There is no *na-leng*.

The sail is then taken to the beach and placed on the canoe. This is then launched and the sail hoisted, and as they sail away the crew stand on the outrigger-platforms dancing and singing songs of the *Tunen* song-and-dance cycle.

CONSECRATION RITE (GODEFROY'S ACCOUNT)

The Inauguration dance, of which the above is a brief and incomplete account, is probably connected with the Consecration rite which Godefroy records:

"This rite has for its object the putting of a taboo on the canoe or whaler, that is to say, making them taboo to women. Once such a vessel is consecrated, no woman may touch it, far less embark on it. . . .

"In 1926, the four smaller clans of Vao—always associated together against the two larger—combined to buy a whaler 30 feet long; it cost them £200. As they received delivery of it about New Year's Day, they called it 'New-year,' which they pronounce *niouyet*.[2] For three months it lay at anchor off the beach belonging to Norohure, save for a few short journeys to the neighbouring islets and to the Canal du Segond.

"On account of the ravages of the sea-worms which live in those warm waters and bore through the keels of wooden boats, they hastened to construct a shelter for their beautiful whaler. They immediately made this shelter taboo, by sacrificing a pig in the dancing-ground. This shelter is one of the four existing on the shores of the island; I say 'exist,' for in fact there was only one left standing at the time the shelter in question was erected, the others had fallen in and rotted where they were, but the natives referred to them as if they still existed, on account of the sacrifices that had been made for them.

"As for the whaler, she received a grand consecration, similar to that of one of the great chiefs.[3] In her honour were sacrificed a dozen great tusked boars and a hundred cocks and hens, and two tons of yams were offered and placed, all decorated, on the great *kal-kal*.[4] . . . Then the natives danced all night till dawn, as is done in the great [Maki] rites.

[1] I.e. when the canoe is made and owned by the active "line" of Maki-men, to the members of the introducing "line."

[2] A typical example of French transliteration. The *t* is of course silent.

[3] The word "chief" is used throughout this account to mean "man of high Maki rank."

[4] Yam-table.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

"This rite had the effect of conferring a high rank—that of *na-humbe*, on the whaler. Henceforth, the natives will speak of her as of a person. When her owners desire to make a voyage in her, they say, '*N.* [the whaler] *e rong a vala—Niouyet e rong a vi Bu*,' '*N.* wishes to sail—N. wants to go to Ambrym," etc. And if, one day, a mishap should occur on some reef, they will perform mortuary rites as for a chief.[1] . . .

"This initial consecration affects only the whaler's hull. There will soon be another to 'bless' the sail, and its mast; then, lastly, for the rudder.

"These three rites have consecrated the whole whaler and her rigging: N. [the whaler] has become a chief, and she lives in a house, also 'blessed.' As I have already said, no woman may either touch her, or go aboard. If, one day, a neighbouring white man takes it into his head to approach the native owners with a view to borrowing their whaler, the elders whom he has approached will stipulate as part of the contract that the white man shall undertake, under pain of paying a high fine, to respect the taboo against women." [2]

The consecrated canoe acquires the "soul" and rank of (a) *the sacrificed tusker, and* (b) *its owner, the sacrificer.*

Another result of its consecration is to confer on the canoe, or whaler, a "soul" through identification with the chief sacrificial tusker whose title it assumes. Since the owner, i.e. the sacrificer, himself takes the same title, it is clear that this rite is in fact another form of Maki, in which not only the man, but also the canoe, takes on the rank of the sacrificed boar, and the two are, in this respect, identical.

Godefroy describes in moving terms the fate of a boat whose owner had died. The whaler was found "apparently abandoned under an old shelter. [The vessel had been bought in Noumea, and they had paid 2000 francs for it.[3]] It is no longer in use . . . simply because the chief shareholder (two clans shared in the purchase) has died, and, since then, none of his relatives have dared to revivify the 'soul' [4] of this whaler. . . .

[1] See below, p. 536.

[2] Godefroy, I, 1934, pp. 56-7. On one occasion, the young men of Pete-hul lent their "Comet" (see p. 470) to a young planter from a neighbouring isle, for a considerable sum. Several months later, the elders of Pete-hul, having found out that the young planter had allowed his wife aboard, went into a great rage, and forced their young clansmen who had arranged the affair to pay over to them the whole of the money they had received as rent.

[3] At pre-war rate of exchange. The incident took place about 1915.

[4] Godefroy does not record the native word which he translates "soul." The endowing of a canoe with individuality which this rite implies recalls Rivers's description, I, vol. I, pp. 170-1, of a rite performed at the launching of a canoe in Mota and Merlav which is similar to that carried out at the birth of a child.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

501
T32
774

"When Masing [1] and his relatives bought this whaler, the elders of their clan consecrated it by sacrificing a valuable tusked boar, by which act the whaler assumed the rank of the sacrificed tusker. Now, the boar in question was a *na-humbe*, and the vessel had thus been promoted to the rank of chief. Several months later, they consecrated, by means of sacrifices and other rites, its sail, its masts, its rudder, and finally its hold. In this way, the 'Queen'—that was the boat's name—had acquired the rank of high chief, and thenceforth no woman might go aboard, or even touch her. Masing and his whaler had now become one and the same person, and, when Masing died, the 'soul' of his whaler followed its master, in other words disappeared. It will not return to inhabit its timbers again till that day on which a fresh sacrifice is made similar to the first. Meanwhile, the vessel is dead, but, for all that, has not lost her consecrated character. And if, either through meanness, or fearing the considerable outlay necessary for repairs, no one decides to become Masing's successor, the 'Queen' will rot to pieces where she is, and her shelter will also collapse and die." [2]

"MORTUARY" RITES FOR A WRECKED SEA-GOING CANOE

501
766

So strong is the belief in the personal existence of a canoe that has thus been raised to high rank through sacrifice, that such craft are considered not only to live like human beings of high rank, but also, literally, to "die," and at their "death" they are accorded corresponding funerary rites.

Godefroy recounts how, during a storm, a whaler, named "Comet," after Halley's comet, which was brilliantly visible in the New Hebrides, was wrecked while an all-night dance was in progress in honour of the boat-shed they were erecting for it (they were all drunk). The "Comet" was driven on to the reef on the opposing mainland shore, and disappeared.

"On about the fifth day, when the sea had again become calm, the elders of the clan despatched several reliable men to conduct a search on the reef in order to establish the fact of the 'Comet's' 'death.' The seekers returned with the remains of the keel which they had found wedged between two coral rocks. The elders then held a debate, during the course of which they decided to begin forthwith the ceremonies proper to the death of a chief: the sounding of gongs and all-night dances lasting ten days; they began that very night.

"Nor was that all. On the thirtieth day of this mourning, men of

[1] Masing is not a title of high rank. Names are so frequently changed during the successive Maki rites that white men, not bothering themselves with native rites, frequently continue to call a man by the name he bore when they first knew him. This may be a case in point.

[2] Godefroy, 1, 1932, p. 226.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

high [Maki] degree came carrying on their shoulders, from the dancing-ground of Pete-hul to the shore . . . a model canoe [1] . . . then in all the freshness of its funerary toilet. The whole thing, including the outrigger, was garlanded in perfect taste: truly, pious hands must have done this work.

"In the canoe's dug-out they had placed, on a bed of *roses de Chine* [2] and red and yellow crotons, a very curious object. It was a packet, something like one of the spindles used by our grandmothers when they pulled it clear of a full skein, swollen with linen or wool threads. I failed to discover what this packet was made of. All they would tell me was that it was 'like iron,' and that it was called *na-kor*.[3] Anything that the *na-kor* touches becomes taboo to women. They told me that this object came to them from Raga, where it is in common use. In their language, *na-kor* means 'ancient custom.'

"As they placed this model canoe on the ground, I saw that they were leading, dragged by their feet, two large tusked boars, '*bouar*,' [4] worth at least twelve English pounds apiece. At that moment, they launched the mortuary canoe, and at the same time loaded the two boars on a large canoe with three Pete-hul men aboard. They had calculated the right moment, when the tide flowing towards the opposite shore was at its strongest. The three men paddled their own canoe, but one of them from time to time gave a little shove to the model canoe in such a way that, together with its burden, it appeared to float of its own accord to the place of sacrifice. The reef on which the wreck occurred was a good 800 yards away; the voyage passed without incident.

"It was truly touching to see these aged men, this attentive audience, executing with obviously deep faith a rite which, in our eyes, has no real object, for it was a matter of no less weight, for them, than going to do honour, by means of extremely expensive sacrifices, to the chief's soul which the whale-boat had possessed during its lifetime!—a rite which had been handed down to them by means of tradition centuries old.

"Arrived at the spot where the 'Comet' had foundered, they sacrificed the two tuskers; then, after forming into a kind of procession in single file,[5] they paddled back. The two boars were carried up to Pete-hul dancing-ground, where they were cut up and their flesh divided among those chiefs who possessed the same rank as the 'dead' whale-boat."

[1] Such as is used in mortuary rites.

[2] I do not know to what kind of flower this refers.

[3] This is evidently the same word as that which I record as *na-kur*, used for the type of magic employed in connexion with the correct placing of the outrigger booms. The expert who practises it is called *mara kur*. See p. 466; cf. also the word *kur-kur-vat*, used for the stones placed over an old man's grave.

[4] I.e. of grade *bo-ware* (re-entrant-tusker). See p. 243.

[5] This evidently refers to other canoes which had paddled out to witness the "obsequies."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

501
766

The model canoe, "admirably constructed down to the smallest detail," was subsequently deposited and left to rot beneath a shelter on the shore at the spot where the path belonging to the Pete-hul clan comes down to the sea.[1]

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1932, pp. 227-8. It would appear that such rites are only observed in cases of sudden death, i.e. wreck. He also says: "I have seen with my own eyes the end of 'Queen' and of 'Saint-Michel,' I have seen them die a quiet death. The first thing that happens is that their tabooed shelter collapses over them. During the time it takes for one to rot, her consecration is respected until the end. The idea would never enter anyone's mind that he should carry off any part of her for, let us say, firewood. . . . It was heartrending, when, towards the end, 'Saint-Michel' had been the victim of an accidental fire, to watch her rails and half-burnt timbers sink in their last agony to the ground, and then swiftly become covered with plants and creepers. To-day, nothing but the site remains." (Godefroy, 1, 1934, p. 58.)

2: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1936
0012 Malekula 0012
Small Islands

who had returned to his own people and was busy reviving the fortunes of his village in the same way. These two men were among my best informants, since they themselves were conscious learners from the older men and, like all learners, the most capable of passing on their knowledge.

Nor were the people of Atchin averse to using such aspects of the white man's material culture as would seem to them to further their interests. Though stone tools were still used for gardening and shell tools for carving, some natives possessed knives, but such things were not common, and the degradation in plastic art which everywhere followed on their introduction had, at the time of my visit, only recently begun to show itself. It seemed, by the way, most curious to me that, with the tremendous labour of digging in hard ground with nothing better than hard-wood sticks, no white man had thought of introducing more efficient agricultural implements, but none such existed. The hard-earned white man's money obtained on distant plantations was used almost exclusively with two objects in view. One was the purchase of whaleboats to replace their former long-distance canoes in order to facilitate the trade in and exchange of pigs in other islands. The second, closely connected with it, had as its result the only real benefit conferred by the white man, indirectly and without his knowledge, on the native. When I arrived on Atchin I was surprised at the number of young men who spoke pidgin English. It was not till I had been some time on the island that the reason for this became apparent. One of the least desirable aspects of the social system in this and the neighbouring islands was polygamy which, since most of the older men had two wives, effectually prevented the younger men from marrying until a comparatively late age. Wives are bought with the most valuable currency known in Atchin, namely pigs. So the younger men seized the opportunity created by the system of indentured labour to sign on for three years, without, like other natives, running up debts at the trader's store, so that with the money thus earned they might, on their return, buy pigs with which to purchase wives. This wholly beneficial revolution in the social machinery was in full swing at the time of my visit, but Mr. Harrisson tells me, and this is one of the most interesting points of comparison between then and now, that the old men have now turned tables on the young, and by devaluing the pig in terms of women and increasing the bride-price from eight or nine pigs to fifty or sixty, have thus restored the old equilibrium, and incidentally, presumably, their own authority. When we reflect upon the fact that the young men twenty-two years ago are the older men now we have a useful sidelight on one of the mechanisms governing the rise and fall of revolutions.

Another effect of the increased wealth in pigs thus gained was the elimination of the lower grades from the *Maki* hierarchy. This process was not primarily due to the wealth so gained, but, like so many other changes in native custom, was very much accentuated by it. In all other parts of Malekula the *Maki*, as has already been pointed out, is a graded hierarchy in which the grades are taken by individuals, and the taking of them demands great expenditure of pigs and other forms of wealth, so that when a man has reached the highest grade called *Mal* he is a very great man and jealous of his distinction. The tendency in such districts was consequently to increase the number of pre-

2: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1936
OO12 Malekula OO12
Small Islands

liminary grades in order to enhance the dignity of those few who had reached the highest rank. In Atchin, on the other hand, owing to the communal nature of the rite and the mutual help afforded by every member of the village community to every other member, a contrary process was at work, the lower grades being already in process of elimination before the arrival of the white man. With the acquisition of the new wealth this process became speeded up, with the result that by the time of my visit they had all disappeared, so that each and every man, youth, and male piccaninny on the island who was capable of sacrificing a pig belonged to the grade *Mal*, much to the chagrin of those in other communities who had taken a lifetime achieving it. Even the older men on Atchin felt somewhat abashed by the general levelling-up, and, in order to assert their own superiority, a new supernumerary grade had been invented, called *Mel-teg*, literally "The *Mal* who stays at home," referring to the vows of abstinence taken after the *Maki*. It is amusing and significant to note that, according to Mr. Harrisson, the young men have again asserted their equality and that now most men on Atchin possess the title *Mel-teg*, and apparently for the moment, in this respect at any rate, democracy has reasserted itself, for there is no record of any further supernumerary grade.

The younger generation of natives made use of the white man's coming not only in the direction of freeing themselves from the domination of the older men. With the acute dramatic sense which is the essence of their culture they had also made up to some extent for other deprivations which the white man had brought about by using both him and his inventions for the enhancement of their already rich ritual life. Pantomimic representations of various aspects of the white man's activities had been incorporated into the dramatic repertory of the *na-leng* plays and dances, muskets were used to heighten the effect of ritual combats during the sex-initiatory expedition to Omba, into the more serious initiation rites on Atchin, in which hoaxes are performed on the initiates, more than one white man's *tour de force* was incorporated, and many of the masks and images were made lurid by means of Reckett's blue.

It is however significant to note that, even in the case of such a wide departure from native tradition as the abandonment of the manufacture of their own long-distance canoes in favour of white men's whale-boats, the old consecration rites were still continued. At one such consecration rite at which I was present over sixty valuable tusked boars were sacrificed, and the supreme sacrifice was that of a bullock, obtained from a trader, for which all the complicated sacrificial ritual was performed; while in the pantomimic dances the skulls of a bullock and two goats were used as masks.

One final word as to the causes of depopulation. At the time of my visit the population was on the decline. Of physical causes the chief was, as has been seen, the introduction of the musket which turned comparatively harmless semi-ritual combats into lethal battles. Second to this, the introduction of diseases, mainly of dysentery, which wiped out whole families. As to the psychological causes put forward by Rivers and others but denied by Mr. Harrisson, all I am able to say quite definitely is that there was at that time a general belief among the older men and some of the young ones that the race was doomed. The old men remembered the day when native culture was the highest achievement of the human race as they conceived it. The appearance